

Hilda Faulkner - Interviewed by Diedra Northern

Hilda Faulkner: This is a story of the life of my grandmother, Cora Isabelle Davis Johnson. My grandmother, Cora Isabelle Davis Johnson, was born Oct. 25, 1847 in Bolton, Warren County, New York. During childhood, she moved with her parents to Council Bluffs, Iowa. Her parents moved to Salt Lake City when she was thirteen years old.

After six years there, they moved to Idaho where she married John Lycurgus Johnson March 1, 1867. She moved with her husband and family to Ashley Valley and lived in Ashley Town nine years. For eight years she acted as postmistress, then moved to Maeser, [also called] Mill Ward, for twenty years, and from there to Vernal City, where she assisted in the store of her husband, Lycurgus Johnson and Sons. It was where the First Security Bank now stands in Vernal City [3 East Main].

She was a faithful church worker in the Sunday school. She was stake president of the YLMIA for several years. She laid the cornerstone where the Uintah State Bank [3 East Main] was built. She was the mother of eleven children and Mable Gardner and Jay Mitchell made their home with her for years. She had many friends and was good to everyone, especially the sick and the poor. She had many name sakes, even Indian children were named after her.

Her children were as follows: Willis Lycurgus, born March 18, 1869; James Warren, born October 25, 1870; Nathan, born April 2, 1872, he was a twin to Alfred Nathaniel, he was born April 2, 1872; Snellen Ickabod, born September 3, 1874; Eugene, born February 28, 1876; LeRoy, born September 18, 1877; Clarence Erwin, born March 23, 1879; Nancy Pearl, born April 16, 1881; Cora Mertyl, born April 21, 1883; Hazel, born September 23, 1886. Clair, Pearl, Mertyl, and Hazel were born in Vernal.

Cora Isabelle Davis Johnson died February 10, 1926 at the home of her son, Snellen Johnson. She was a resident of Uintah Basin for forty-seven years. Her funeral was held in the Second Ward chapel with over 600 attending. One of the speakers said, "Those who knew her best, loved her most." She was lovingly called, most of her life, Aunt Cora Johnson. She was buried in the Rock Point Cemetery in Maeser.

This is John Lycurgus Johnson, husband of Cora Johnson. I'm Hilda Faulkner and this is my grandfather. My grandfather, John Lycurgus Johnson, was born August 25, 1844. He was the son of Willis Johnson and Nancy Greer. Willis Johnson was the son of Snellen Johnson and Mary Foreman.

He was born at Brennin, Texas. He came with his widowed mother to Utah in 1854. They settled in Rich County, Idaho. He married Cora Isabelle Davis March 1, 1867 at St. Charles, Idaho. She was the daughter of Nathan Cutler Davis and Isabelle Wells Davis. Their children: Willis Lycurgus, died when a child; James Warren married Minerva Wilkins; Nathan died when a child; Alfred Nathaniel married Mary DeFreiz; Eugene died when a child; LeRoy died when a child; Clarence Erwin married Aida May Rich; Nancy Pearl married Brig Christensen; Cora Mertyl married Edward Arvy Belcher; Hazel married Douglas King.

Lycurgus Johnson was a high priest, a high councilman and a ward teacher. When first married, they settled in St. Charles, Idaho, in 1864 and moved to Vernal, Utah in 1879 and located in Old Ashley Town. There he became the second postmaster of the valley. He was also elected the first sheriff. He built the second flour mill in the valley in 1885. He was a member of

the Constitutional Convention in Salt Lake City in 1896. He was a representative of Uintah County for two terms. He was appointed a member of the Continental Congress from Utah to Texas in 1884. He was a United States marshal for several years, county sheriff and Uintah County commissioner. He was mayor of Vernal City, a school trustee and a farmer.

Lycurgus started a general merchandising store in the Old Ashley Town, which was one of the first stores in the Ashley Valley, and he later moved the store to the Ed Oaks corner across the street from the James Hacking home [southeast corner of Main Street and Vernal Avenue], and then later had a large store where the First Security Bank is [3 East Main Street]. Uintah State Bank purchased this land from my grandmother, Cora Johnson. She laid the cornerstone for the bank.

Lycurgus was chairman of the members of the high council that built our stake tabernacle, now standing and being used for our conference. My grandfather's funeral was held there. Lycurgus had built a cut-stone rock house. The stone was from Ashley Canyon. It was in use until a few years ago. At one time it was considered the best house in the valley. He suffered for years with heart trouble that turned to dropsy and died June 29, 1908. His funeral was held in the tabernacle. He is buried in the Rock Point Cemetery in Maeser.